

NEW FACTS CONCERNING JOHN ROBINSON

by

CHAMPLIN BURRAGE

SP 922.3 R662B

DUKE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY  
DURHAM, N. C.



Rec'd December 10, 1929

Special Appropriation



*A Tercentenary Memorial*

NEW FACTS CONCERNING  
JOHN ROBINSON

PASTOR OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS

BY

CHAMPLIN BURRAGE

HON. M.A. (BROWN UNIVERSITY)

B.LITT. (OXON.)

WITH FACSIMILE FRONTISPIECE

OXFORD

PRINTED BY HORACE HART

AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

LONDON: PUBLISHED BY HENRY FROWDE

1910

*Price One Shilling and Sixpence net*









*A Tercentenary Memorial*

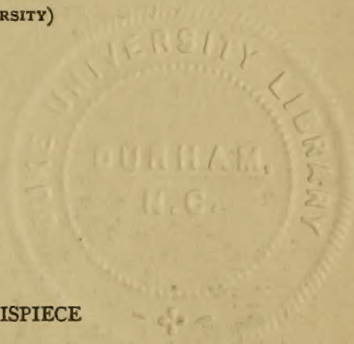
NEW FACTS CONCERNING  
JOHN ROBINSON

PASTOR OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS

BY

CHAMPLIN BURRAGE

HON. M.A. (BROWN UNIVERSITY)  
B.LITT. (OXON.)



WITH FACSIMILE FRONTISPIECE

OXFORD  
PRINTED BY HORACE HART  
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
LONDON: PUBLISHED BY HENRY FROWDE

1910







12/10/10  
Special papers.

G. E. S.

1388  
School of Theology  
Library

922.3

R 662 B

SCHOOL OF RELIGION

## PREFACE

THE past year, besides being the Tercentenary of the arrival of the Pilgrim Fathers in Leyden, was also the probable Tercentenary of the beginning of John Robinson's pastorate. This appears to have commenced in 1609, about the time of the departure of the Pilgrims from Amsterdam to Leyden, and not earlier, as has sometimes been supposed. It is hoped, therefore, that the publication of this pamphlet may be timely.

While the writer was making investigations necessary for the preparation of the following pages, ready help was given him by the Rectors and Vicars of various Norwich churches, and every possible assistance by Mr. J. H. Ash, Churchwarden of St. Andrew's Church; by Mr. F. R. Beecheno, who has written an elaborate manuscript history of that church in two volumes; by Mr. Leonard G. Bolingbroke, now Registrar of the Diocesan Registry, Norwich; and by Mr. A. J. Wallis, M.A., Bursar of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. To these gentlemen, and to all others, who have in any way aided the writer in his researches, he extends his heartiest thanks.

C. B.

OXFORD, Sept. 15, 1910.

Pa3131

## GOVERNOR BRADFORD'S DESCRIPTION OF ROBINSON

### MR. JOHN ROBINSON

Was pastor of that famous church of Leyden, in Holland ; a man not easily to be paralleled for all things, whose singular virtues we shall not take upon us here to describe. Neither need we, for they so well are known both by friends and enemies. . . . He was very courteous, affable, and sociable . . . He was an acute and expert disputant, very quick and ready, . . . He was never satisfied in himself until he had searched any cause or argument he had to deal in thoroughly and to the bottom ; and we have heard him sometimes say to his familiars that many times, both in writing and disputation, he knew he had sufficiently answered others, but many times not himself ; and was ever desirous of any light, and the more able . . . the persons were, the more he desired to confer and reason with them.

(Governor Bradford's description of Robinson written in 1648, as published in A. Young's 'Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers', Boston [Mass.], 1841, pp. 451-2.)



## NEW FACTS CONCERNING JOHN ROBINSON

ONE of the characters in whom many English and Americans will always take a lively interest is John Robinson, Pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers. Robinson himself, as is well known, never visited American shores, but he sped the first successful New England colonists on their way, and from a distance anxiously viewed the beginnings of the Plymouth Colony.

During the past half century several authors have published works which deal more or less minutely with Robinson's life. Among these may be mentioned Rev. Robert Ashton, Rev. Joseph Hunter, Dr. H. M. Dexter, Dr. John Brown, Dr. Ozora S. Davis, Mr. Edward Arber, Rev. Morton Dexter, and Rev. Alexander Gordon, who wrote the account of Robinson in the 'Dictionary of National Biography'. All of Robinson's extant works were long since supposed to have been published by Mr. Ashton.

Considering all the time that has been spent in studying Robinson's life, it is surprising how slight is our present knowledge of his early years. Under these circumstances a few facts, which have recently come to light concerning that part of his career, may prove of interest.

### I. AN HITHERTO UNKNOWN ROBINSON MANUSCRIPT.

During 1905, while examining an old catalogue of manuscripts<sup>1</sup> extant about two centuries ago, I came across the following item, 'An Answer to Robinson the Brownists Arguments.' At the time I fancied there was little likelihood that I would ever see this manuscript, even if it were still in

<sup>1</sup> 'Catalogi Librorum Manuscriptorum Angliae et Hiberniae in Unum Collecti', Oxoniae, 1697, folio.

existence, but I made a note of it, as there appeared to be no known work relating to Robinson which bore a similar title. Three years later I met with a manuscript in the Bodleian Library catalogued as follows, 'An answer to John Robinson the Brownist, on separation from the Church of England: . . . This may be a copy corrected by the author and sent to a friend at Reading (see fol. 3<sup>v</sup>, and inside the last cover)'.<sup>1</sup> Having examined this work, I was first struck by the fact that it contained points in Robinson's life not otherwise known, and I at once began to transcribe the entire text. Later, when I was looking up the history of the manuscript, the item in the old catalogue was brought to my recollection, and on further examination I found to my great pleasure that this was the very writing which I had noted at an earlier period.

#### A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT.

This long-forgotten manuscript is almost perfectly preserved. Indeed, from its appearance one may easily surmise that during the whole three hundred years of its existence the neat little volume has seldom been removed from the shelves of a library. The work, which covers 158 written pages, is in quarto format bound in a simple binding of limp vellum delicately ornamented with gilt. From the author's 'Advertisement' we learn that this is not the original manuscript, but a contemporary copy [containing one additional main section] which was evidently made not long after the original was finished, and before the latter was sent on its way to Robinson at Leyden. The transcript is also anonymous and undated. The copyist wrote an unusually fine, clear hand for that period, and executed his work with the greatest care. Toward the end the handwriting is much finer than at the beginning. For a time this copy may have been laid aside in the state in which the transcriber had left it, but after a while the author seems to have added a prefatory note in his own hand, which he styles 'An Advertisement

<sup>1</sup> MS. Jones 30.



of the answerer, serving for introduction'. He also carefully indicated in the margins which sections were written by Robinson, and which by himself. He further wrote one or two marginal references, and corrected the spelling of a few words in the transcription of which mistakes had been made.

The author, however, gave the transcript no special title, a circumstance which suggests that it was not intended for publication, but on the back of the binding he apparently wrote a few words, now partly illegible, to serve as a rough title. They are probably, 'An Answ[er] | to Mr. Rob- | inson | MS.' Inside the back cover the author also added the following singularly anonymous instructions presumably for the messenger to whom he delivered the manuscript, 'This booke is to bee sent | eyther to Readinge immediately [i. e., directly] | or by way of London by | Mr. Thurlbie meanes who | dwells at the Black Boy in | Southwark'.<sup>1</sup>

Other contemporaneous marginal notes referring to several publications of, and against, the Brownists, &c., were also made in the transcript about this time by some third person, and apparently at a somewhat later period a reader has changed the spelling of one word. With this exception the document seems to-day to be practically in the same condition in which it must have been at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

#### THE HISTORY OF THE MANUSCRIPT.

The manuscript was written as an outcome of a controversy between Robinson and an unnamed opponent, the details of which are chiefly given in the author's 'Advertisement'. A former friend of Robinson's apparently came to Amsterdam not long after Robinson had removed with his congregation to Leyden. Here in Amsterdam his friend seems to have met Matthew Slade and 'bewayled' Robinson's

<sup>1</sup> In all the citations contained in these pages the use of capital letters has been normalized, and the punctuation has often been entirely altered. The original spelling has been retained, but abbreviations have generally been extended.

'fallinge of from the Church of England', and expressed the desire to 'speake with him'. Accordingly Mr. Slade notified Robinson, who wrote a very cordial communication to his old friend wherein he stated the reasons for his separation. To this his friend made reply urging Robinson not to consider what had been said by him to Mr. Slade as a challenge requiring a defence of his (Robinson's) faith, but as an expression of 'auncient' friendship and continued interest. This anonymous friend also manifested his disappointment at what he terms Robinson's 'rupture from the Church', and urged him in the discussion of that subject with him 'to frame his argument [es?] logically', i. e. syllogistically,<sup>1</sup> and in order that the debate might be particular and concrete, he happily added that one matter to be considered by them should relate to Robinson's 'seperation from that church or parishe of St. Andrewes in Norwich of which he had lately bene a minister', against which it was evident, as will be seen later, that certain arguments would not so aptly apply, which would have been of weight if directed against the ordinary parish churches at that time. To this contention of his friend against his separation, and separation in general, Robinson wrote his objections, and his friend after some delay finally prepared an answer (incorporating much of the text of Robinson's letter), and sent it to him<sup>2</sup> at Leyden. Before so doing he had the copy made which we are now discussing. Not long afterwards, the transcript was probably sent to some

<sup>1</sup> It is a noticeable fact, that the published writings of John Robinson are almost entirely free from any forms of expression which would suggest that he had had a University education. This circumstance has raised a doubt whether he could have been a Cambridge graduate. The manuscript here described plainly proves that he understood, and also sometimes used syllogistic argument, while the following citation from Thomas Helwys' 'A Short Declaration of the mistery of iniquity', 1612, p. 138, undoubtedly explains why Robinson did not generally employ scholastic methods of reasoning in his books: 'It were to be wished, and you have often bene required to lay away your schoole tearmes in the causes of God, whereby you do for the most part but hide the truth, and blind the eies of the simple . . .'

<sup>2</sup> Fol. 3 verso of the MS.



old Cambridge friend beneficed at Reading, whose approval the author desired.

It might be remarked here that Reading was the birth-place of Archbishop Laud, who, in 1610, about the time this transcript was written, was resigning his Fellowship at St. John's College, Oxford. Whether the manuscript ever came into his hands, will probably never be known, but eventually, if not shortly, it seems to have come into the possession of Samuel Fell (1584-1649),<sup>1</sup> Rector of Sunningwell,<sup>2</sup> near Abingdon, Berks., after Sept. 21, 1625, and Dean of Christ Church, Oxford. At his death the manuscript evidently passed into the library of his son, Dr. John Fell, who was born at Sunningwell in 1625 and died in 1686. Dr. John Fell likewise became Dean of Christ Church, and also Bishop of Oxford.

It is well known that some of Dr. Fell's books at his death became the property of Rev. Henry Jones, his nephew and co-heir, likewise Rector of Sunningwell. Our manuscript was probably one of these. At the close of the seventeenth century the library of Mr. Jones was one of the notable English collections. Among his manuscripts this transcript was catalogued as No. 52 in the great work, to which reference has already been made, published at Oxford in 1697 and entitled '*Catalogi Librorum Manuscriptorum Angliae et Hiberniae*', &c. In 1707 Mr. Jones died, and many of his manuscripts, including this one, subsequently came to the Bodleian Library, where it was apparently consulted by the present writer for the first time for purposes of study.

#### THE AUTHOR OF THE MANUSCRIPT.

One of the most difficult and tantalizing problems connected with the manuscript relates to its authorship. Who was this anonymous person who answers Robinson with such ability and on the whole in such good spirit, and yet who,

<sup>1</sup> See the Dict. of Nat. Biography for the lives of Samuel and John Fell, and of Rev. Henry Jones.

<sup>2</sup> Sunningwell is about thirty miles from Reading.

possibly for self-protection, has so concealed his identity as almost to deprive us of the hope of ever discovering his name? Fortunately the manuscript is not entirely wanting in information respecting the author's life, and we also have a whole page of his handwriting in the introductory 'Advertisement'.

As has already been said, the author was an old friend of Robinson's,<sup>1</sup> and at the close of the manuscript he styles himself his 'loving freind'. He was also a very able logician, and turns Robinson's rather loosely framed syllogisms about as he pleases, chiding him at times that he should reason so poorly for a University man. Accordingly we may infer that our author was a Cambridge graduate of ability, and that at Cambridge he and Robinson had been friends. From the author's familiarity with the Bible and with the theological and ecclesiastical controversies of the time, we may infer that he was a clergyman, a surmise the truth of which is established by the author's words at the end of his treatise, where he calls himself Robinson's 'fellow seruant'. He also manifests such a knowledge of St. Andrew's Church, Norwich, as appears to indicate either that he was a native of that city, or that he had lived there and knew the particular character of that church rather more intimately than a non-resident at that period would have been likely to have known it.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, in one place it might almost be inferred that he himself had been one of the ministers connected with St. Andrew's, when he says:<sup>3</sup> 'wheras St. Andrewes hath three

<sup>1</sup> See fol. 3 verso, where the author speaks of his 'auncient love' for Robinson.

<sup>2</sup> This is shown in the following passage among others:—

'But to passe by that, I marvayle howe a man professing sinceriteye as you doe, could force his consyence so farre as to saie, that the Ministry of St. Andrewes came not in by the Lords plaine waye of election, seying you knowe the Minister therof is freelye chosen by the congregacyon, not by the Patron, nor by the Bishop. And yf you replie the Bishop must gyue his approbacyon, I answere the confirmacyon of the Bishop denyes not free election to the people no more then to the Patrone.' (Fol. 69 verso.)

<sup>3</sup> Fol. 41 verso. There is one passage in the manuscript, which might



[Elders] that doe administer to it, all preachers, and two of them noe whit inferior to your self in anye grace of God for the Ministrye, in some superior, as I suppose your humilitye will confes.' Here the author might be interpreted to mean, that of the three preaching Elders connected with St. Andrew's about 1609 (of which number he possibly considered himself as still being one), two were certainly Robinson's equals, and that for the sake of modesty he would not speak of his own abilities.

Whatever may be the correct interpretation of this passage, our author had evidently been in active service in the Church of England, was of Puritan tendencies,<sup>1</sup> and like Robinson had been compelled to stop preaching, because he had not conformed in ritualistic practices as thoroughly as had been enjoined: 'For you & I & others, because we could not obserue all other thinges required, were put from preaching as from a specyall parte of our ministrye, thereby to compell vs to the other thinges, which surelie they would not haue done, yf our ministrye had stood in those thinges onely wherein you place it.'<sup>2</sup>

We do not know just when the author was suspended, or whether he submitted after a while and subscribed, but from one or two passages we may infer that, if he did so temporarily about 1606, he was ultimately obliged to leave England; that he first came to Amsterdam<sup>3</sup> shortly after Robinson had departed for Leyden; that somewhat later he returned to England for a brief visit;<sup>4</sup> and that when he wrote the

seem to indicate that our author was in reality not so well acquainted with affairs in St. Andrew's as has been suggested in the text:—

'This we haue disproued before, haueing shewed that howe euer there maie be in that assemblie [St. Andrew's Church] some notorious offenders (which is more then I knowe) . . . ' (Fol. 70 verso.)

In interpreting this passage one needs to remember that neither Robinson nor his opponent were in Norwich at this time, and hence St. Andrew's might not unnaturally be spoken of as 'that assemblie', while the clause 'which is more then I knowe' might mean nothing more than 'which is more than I can say with certainty'.

<sup>1</sup> See fol. 69 recto.

<sup>2</sup> Fol. 53 verso and 54 recto.

<sup>3</sup> Fol. 3 verso.

<sup>4</sup> Fol. 4 recto.

original of this manuscript, he was once more in Holland<sup>1</sup> (and probably in Amsterdam), where he had apparently connected himself with the Dutch Classis.<sup>2</sup>

These are practically all the points of interest concerning the author's life to be gleaned from the manuscript. They are suggestive, but evidently the handwriting of the 'Advertisement' will afford us the only decisive and final test of identification. Under these circumstances it will be well for us to recall the names of some of the early opponents of the Brownists, in order to see if among them there is any one whose career and character would pre-eminently fit the requirements of this case.

First, we may cite the following passage from John Robinson's '*A Iyustification of Separation*' published in 1610<sup>3</sup>:—

The next thing I observe is how vauntingly you [Richard Bernard] bring, as challengers into the lists, Mr. Gyshop, Mr. [William] Bradshaw, D. Allison, and other vn-named [Puritan] Ministers, all which you say are vnanswered by vs. And no marveil, for sundry of their writings never came to our hands, . . . Yet are theyr books and . . . shalbe answered in particular, as they come to our hands and are thought worthy answering ; though in truth it were no hard thing for our adversaries to oppresse us with the multitude of books, considering both how few, and how feeble, we are in comparison (besides other outward difficultyes). . .

This is for us an especially suggestive citation, since it shows that before Robinson published his first book, various writings had been sent to the Brownist leaders by their opponents, which never reached their intended destination. Among these lost controversial documents I believe may have been the original of our transcript, for if it had reached Robinson, he would certainly have considered it worthy of an answer, especially after he had stated that 'theyr books' 'shalbe answered in particular as they come to our hands, and are thought worthy answering.' No doubt, too, he would

<sup>1</sup> Fol. 4 recto.

<sup>2</sup> Fol. 21 verso, 'this Reformed Church of the Lowe Countries.'

<sup>3</sup> P. 8.

still have replied to it, if it had reached him after the publication of his book, but we have no knowledge of his having done so.

There are other persons besides those mentioned in the previously cited passage, who are known to have been opponents of the Brownists about this time. Among them William Bradshaw, Joseph Hall, and Dr. William Ames may here be mentioned. Of these Dr. Ames is perhaps the most likely to have written our manuscript. On the other hand, the author may have been some one entirely unknown to the modern world.

Some idea of the author's argumentative style, of his ability as a controversialist, and of his unusually friendly attitude towards Robinson, may be gathered from the following citations, which, though neither so numerous, nor so extended, as might be wished, will nevertheless, it is hoped, serve also to give a better conception of the general character of the manuscript, than would otherwise be possible<sup>1</sup> :—

But ere we goe further, lett me praye you nowe to marke, that yf all your principles be true, it is vnpossible that euer there should be true church or true minister, while the world stands, for you hold :

1. First, that the ministerye of Appostles & Prophets & Evangelistes, which were sent to plant & water sundrye churches, is for euer ceased, which is true.

2. You hould that other ministerye then Christe hath ordeyned maie not be communicated with, & this is described (saie you) [in] Eph : 4, where (besides the former nowe expired) are onely Pastors & Teachers, & this is (saie you) Christes vnalterable ordinance, &c. . . .

3. You hould that there can be noe true Pastors or Teachers, but such as be called by the free election of that church to which they must minister.

4. That since the apostacye of Antichrist, there can be no true church that hath this power of calling a minister, but such as is gathered by the doctrine & ministerye of the Word, & drawen into an holy covenant with God voluntarelye.

Nowe, yf egge & bird be destroyed, I meane church & ministerye

<sup>1</sup> Owing to the extent of the manuscript, my plan to publish its entire text has unfortunately had to be abandoned for the present, but my transcript is complete and ready for publication.



as you imagine, & the one cannot be without the other, riddle & tell me which shall be first, & where we shall beginne, whether at the bird or att the egg, whether at the ministerye or at the church? Not at the church, for that must be gathered by a ministerye of Gods appoyntment. Not at the ministerye, for there can be none but Pastors & Teachers, & these cannott exercise a ministerye without a calling, nor haue a calling but from a true church, which must not be compelled by the maiestrate, but gathered by doctrine of the Word into a voluntarye covenant with God.

If you saie that till the churches be gathered, there maie be another ministerye then that of the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelistes, Pastors, or Teachers, then you confes Christ hath not taken order for all those kinds of ministeryes, which should be needfull for the gathering together of all the saintes contrarye to Ephe. 4 (by your selues alleadged), & that there maie be some other ministry lawfullye & profitablie vsed then he hath ordeyned, which you denye.

Looke about you well & see that you are wrapped vp in your owne cobweb, & eyther must breake it & lett the flie goe, or be swept awaie with it & her. . . .<sup>1</sup>

They [the congregation of St. Andrew's] cannott enioye him [their minister] without the Bishops consent, therefore they did not freelye chose him. It followes not, for a man maie choose her voluntarelye to be his wife, whome he cannott enioye without consent of others. The Lord Maior of London cannott excercise his office, whether the Kinges Maiestie will, or noe; yett the Cittye hath the free choise of him. Approbacyon & election are two thinges, sir, nor is the freedom of election taken awaye by reference to approbacion. Againe, to saie they cannott turne of their ministers without the Bishops consent, therefore they haue nott a free choise of him, is as [if] one should saie a man cannott put awaye his wife without the consent of the lawe, maiestrate, or Church, noe, not for anye faulte, therefore he had not his free choise of her, by which reason also one maie as well proue, that noe member of anye church hath his free election of his minister, because he can neyther enioye nor remove the same but by the will of the greater parte of that congregation.

Secondly, I denie your assertion, for St. Andrewes (having the right of choosing) maie by the constitucion of the churches of England, & by course of lawe enioye anie good minister it shall choose, whether the Bishop will or noe, yf they choose such an one as is

<sup>1</sup> Fol. 70 verso—fol. 71 verso.

without exception in the eye of the lawe, & maie remoue anie one whether the Bishop will or noe, yf he be subiect to such exceptions as the lawes haue adiudged worthie such a punishment.

But it seems you thinke the churches haue no libertye vnles without reference to anie cannons, officers, or anie others, they maie at their pleasure vnsadle their riders that should gouerne them, which libertie to the multitude of fraile men were worse then want of it, & to the ministry a miserable vasseladge, of which some of your predecessors haue had experience, your self maie [have], & drinke as you haue brewed.<sup>1</sup>

Thus haue I finished a longe answer, beyng desirous, yf God will, to gyue you satisfaction, & vnwilling to interrupt my other occasions with anie second returnes. I will not end as you did with the name of the Devill, beyng (perhaps) loth to salute me (which is an vn-mannerlye fashion of sundrie of your side), but I hartelie commend you to the Lord God of mercye & truth, and beseech him to open your eyes, that you maie see your errors made, & to giue you a true humble spiritt, that you maie not be ashamed to become wise, and a worthy resolucyon to giue God glorie in returning, & causing those poore soules that depend vpon your lippes to returne, that you maie finde peace in the end, which in this course I am perswaded you cannott. And thus praying you to passe by anie escapes of the writer with loue, & to beleue that I loue your person for the Lord Christ his sake, whose wandring seruant I still esteeme you, I end & rest your fellow seruant & loving freind. . . I was willing inough in sundry respectes to haue lett this answer alone after I had finished it, but that I heard on euery side of great bragges cast out, as yf I could not haue answered it, which made me send it to you, that I might not be guiltie of hardening them in their sinne, whose error I do much bewayle. Farewell.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE DATE OF THE MANUSCRIPT.

Though the manuscript is undated as well as anonymous, the determining of its date fortunately does not offer many difficulties. We can be almost certain that the original was written in 1609. The two main reasons for this belief are first, that the original seems to have been written not long

<sup>1</sup> Fol. 71 verso—fol. 72 recto.

<sup>2</sup> Fol. 82 recto.

after Robinson had removed from Amsterdam to Leyden,<sup>1</sup> and secondly, that the latest notes in the margins of our transcript appear to have been added shortly after John Smyth, the Se-Baptist, was ejected from his congregation in Amsterdam.<sup>2</sup> Now it is well known that Robinson arrived in Leyden about April 21 (Old Style), or May 1 (New Style), 1609, and that Smyth was cast out of his church 'some time before March 12, 1610 (New Style). Hence, also, it is decidedly probable that the transcript was written later than the early spring of 1609, but before 1611.

CITATIONS FROM ROBINSON'S LOST WRITING CONTAINED  
IN THE MANUSCRIPT.

Right welcome was your letter vnto me (beloved Sir), both for your owne sake, & for the truthes, into which it maketh so open an entrie for enquire. The time you tooke for answeere needes (as you see) none excuse with me, which I doe iustifie by vseing far greater libertie my self, though vpon other occasion.<sup>3</sup>

And for the mencion you made of me to youre freinde [Matthew Slade], I doe interpret it even as you desyre I should, onelye intymatyng, that my forsaking the Church of England was noe rapture (as you speake), but an inforced departure vpon the most advised deliberacions I could possiblye take, eyther with the Lord by humblyng my self before him, or with men, for whose advice I spared neyther cost nor paines, but sought out in everye place the most sincere and iudicious in the land for resolucyon to the contrarye, as both God & men can witness with me, but with what effect the yssue manifesteth. . . .<sup>4</sup>

The sundrie acceptions of the word church by you laid downe I acknowledg for good and to be found in the Scriptures, but not them alone, for besides these by you named, the Church is sometyes taken indefinitelye for manye or all particuler churches, because manye or all are but one in nature, forme, definition, essentiall partes, & propertyes, though not in existence, for soe they are as manye

<sup>1</sup> In the author's 'Advertisement', fol. 3 verso. See also fol. 73 recto, where Robinson's congregation is spoken of as being at Leyden.

<sup>2</sup> As indicated in a marginal note on fol. 72 recto.

<sup>3</sup> Fol. 4 recto. In the manuscript all the citations from Robinson are underlined.

<sup>4</sup> Fol. 4 recto.



churches as they are particuler assemblies, ecclesiasticall & spirituall societies, . . .<sup>1</sup>

The instance you propound for the specyall subiect of the questyon in hand I agree to, which is St. Andrewes in Norwich, wherof indeed I was sometymes a minister (as you saie), but neuer anie member, having my house standyng (which is the infallible determinacion of members) within another parish, and my children baptized there, which was and is one parte of the confusion of that Church from which I am seperated.<sup>2</sup>

Onelye I must craue leaue to denie that which you take for graunted, wherein indeed a greate parte of the questyon lyeth, & that is, that St. Andrewes Church is in it self a distinct & entyer church or ecclesiasticall pollicye (which all true churches are), but it is on the contrarye a member of a diocesan, provinceall, & nationall Church, and that in the verye frame and constitution of it vnder the diocesan, provinceall, & nationall Bishops & other officers, which I am sure you will not denie. . . .<sup>3</sup>

Everye true Church of God is gathered out of the world, and separated and sanctified actuallye from the same in religious communion accordyng to the dispensation of the tymes, whether before the Lawe, or vnder the Lawe, or since Christe came in the flesh. . . But St. Andrewes is not so gathered out of the world, nor separated and sanctified from the world according to the dispensation of the Gospell, but was at the first gathered for the most parte, and so still consisteth verye much, of the men of the world, as is most apparent as by other enormityes so in particuler by the persecutions raised, even amongst them selues, against such as professe the feare of God in anye sinceritye, besides that it standes vnseparated ffom, & in spirituall comunion one bodye ecclesiasticall visiblye or externallye with all that parte of the world within the kinges dominions.<sup>4</sup>

Everye true Church of God is ioyned with him in holye covenant by voluntarye profession to haue him the God therof & to be his people. . . .<sup>5</sup>

That the ministerye of St. Andrewes in Norwich is another ministerye then that which Christe hath left in his Church. For confirmacyon wherof you first premise, that the ordinarye ministerye, which Christe hath gyven & the Appostles ordeyned in every particuler church, are Bishops or Elders, & Deacons. . . .<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fol. 5 recto.

<sup>2</sup> Fol. 5 verso.

<sup>3</sup> Fol. 6 recto.

<sup>4</sup> Fol. 17 verso.

<sup>5</sup> Fol. 21 verso.

<sup>6</sup> Fol. 38 verso.

That the Church of England reteyneth onely the name of Deaconrye, establishing a most counterfeyte & adulterate office vnder it.

2. St. Andrewes Church is not capeable of the true office of Deaconrye (which all true churches are), neyther hath it vse, or it maie be neuer had or shall haue, of the office of Deaconrye established in the Church of England, as all true Churches haue of all true offices when the Lord affordeth fitt men, so that eyther the Church or the office (or rather both) must be of men & not of God.<sup>1</sup>

But because there is noe such office of Deaconship in St. Andrews which is the subject of the question, therefore we will passe it over and come to the Eldership which Christ hath left in his Church, which I denie to be found in St. Andrews, whether we respect the office in the naturall and essentiall partes of it, or the calling vnto it prescribed by Christe.<sup>2</sup>

First then this office of Eldership is committed by Christ to a companie or colledg of Elders, who are ioyntly to minister to the particuler churches ouer which they are sett. . . But St. Andrewes neyther is nor can be possessed of any such Eldership thus ioyntlye to minister to it, Ergo.<sup>3</sup>

The Elders which Christe hath left are to feed the flocke of Christ vnder Christe the cheife Sheepheard immediatly, & are countable to noe other sheepheard but him alone spirituallie. . . But the ministers of St. Andrews are to feed not onlie Christes flocke but the Bishops flocke, to whome, as to an high Shepheard, they must be countable. Ergo, the ministers of St. Andrews are not such as Christ hath left to his Church.<sup>4</sup>

The feedyng which Christ inioynes his ministers is the teaching & ouerseeing of the flocke. But for the Ministerie of St. Andrewes, as it is vtterlye prohibited all gouernment, which the Bishop ingrosseth into his owne hands that he maie lord it ouer both minister & people, so neyther is feedyng by preaching necessarily inioyned it, &c.<sup>5</sup>

The Ministerie, or rather indeed the Preisthood, of St. Andrewes, & so of all other the parishes of the land, stands in offering vp the daylye sacrificize of the Service Booke, in marijng, burying, churching of women, ministring sacramentes, in forme, readyng homilyes, & performing other cannonicall obedience accordyng to the oath of cannonicall obedience, but for preaching the Gospell, or that parte of it which the lawe alloweth, it is not essencyall to the

<sup>1</sup> Fol. 38 verso—39 recto.      <sup>2</sup> Fol. 41 recto.      <sup>3</sup> Fol. 41 verso.

<sup>4</sup> Fol. 43 verso—44 recto.

<sup>5</sup> Fol. 51 recto.

Ministry of England, but an accidentall, personall qualification, there beyng manye hundreds in the land true ministers accordyng to the English Cannon, which neyther doe nor can preach.<sup>1</sup>

But the waie or entrance into the Ministerye is vnlawfull & a by path, as will appeare yf we compare it with that holye and high waie, which the Scriptures open for all the ministers of the Lord to passe by, which is the free, voluntarie choise & election of that particuler charge wherein they are to minister. . . <sup>2</sup>

But the waye by which the ministers of St. Andrewes enter is not the playne waye of the Lord, but the crooked path of a Lord Bishops ordination & approbacyon, & of a Patrons presentacyon, yea whether the people will or noe.<sup>3</sup>

Yf it be answered, that St. Andrewes hath the choise of her ministers, I doe instance that the libertye it hath nothing helpeth, all thinges beyng rightly considered.<sup>4</sup>

For first, St. Andrewes is not that Church of Christe, that heauenlie Ierusalem, which Christe hath enfranchised with that and the like liberties. It is not a people separated & sanctefied from the world into holye covenant with God, but a confused assemblie & so in that confusion hath her self receyued noe power from Christe, & so can gyue none to anye other.<sup>5</sup>

Secondlie, St. Andrewes hath not the libertie eyther to enioye anye minister, though neuer so holye, or to remoue anie, though never so prophane, but at the will of the Bishop, theire, & their ministers, spirituall Lord.<sup>6</sup>

Thirdlie, St. Andrewes is not possessed of that poore libertie it vseth by anye imediate spirituall right from Christ, as the bodye from the head, the wife from the husband, but by a symonaicall purchase from the Patrone, as the most prophane assemblies in the kingdome (in which not a man feareth God) might purchase it, & so that spirituall libertye, which Christ hath bought with his blood & wherein all Christians ought to stand fast, they buy with a peece of money, committing herein simonie as great as Simon did.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fol. 53, recto and verso.

<sup>2</sup> Fol. 60 recto.

<sup>3</sup> Fol. 69 recto.

<sup>4</sup> Fol. 69 verso.

<sup>5</sup> Fol. 70 recto.

<sup>6</sup> Fol. 71 verso.

<sup>7</sup> Fol. 73 recto.



SUMMARY OF NEW POINTS SUGGESTED BY THE  
MANUSCRIPT.

1. The manuscript definitely states that John Robinson lived in Norwich before his separation, not in the neighbourhood of Norwich, or in the neighbourhood of Great Yarmouth, as has often been reported.

2. It shows that for some time Robinson was connected in an official capacity with the Church of England, and furnishes us with what appears to be the only surviving reference to the particular church in which he officiated before he became a separatist.

3. It tells us that at least two of Robinson's children were baptized in Norwich, in the church of the parish in which his house was situated, and that he did not live in St. Andrew's parish and never was a member of that church, though 'sometimes' a minister there.

4. It provides us with several extended verbatim citations from a writing of Robinson's otherwise apparently lost, which probably supply us with a considerable portion of the text of his work—as much, at any rate, as is now ever likely to be discovered.

5. It affords us specific knowledge of an hitherto unknown written controversy of Robinson's, conducted in the best religious controversial style of the time.

6. It furnishes what I believe to be the only extant evidence expressed in Robinson's own words of the truth of a statement published by John Bastwick in 1646,<sup>1</sup> to the effect that Robinson's departure from the Church of England was not entirely voluntary, but to a certain extent enforced.

7. It contains information which has been of great assistance in more definitely determining the true period of Robinson's pre-separatist residence in Norwich.

8. It apparently gives about the only direct, concrete evidence still in existence that Robinson was really acquainted with, and ever made use of, syllogistic, or scholastic, methods

<sup>1</sup> In 'The utter Routing of the whole Army of all the Independents & Sectaries', London, 1646, 4<sup>o</sup> ('The Antiloquie'), sig. f<sub>2</sub>.

of reasoning, such as prevailed among the University men of his time.

9. It throws an interesting light upon the controversy which took place in 1618 between Robinson and John Yates, B.D., Minister since 1616 of St. Andrew's Church, Norwich, and shows how naturally such a controversy arose. It suggests, too, that Mr. Yates was only carrying on a written discussion with Robinson concerning Laymen's use of 'prophecy', in which William Euring acted as messenger; and that the expression Mr. Yates' 'Monopolie' was not the title of a printed book by Yates, as Dr. Dexter seems to have thought, or even the title of Yates' manuscript, but only a name which Robinson himself applied to his opponent's argument on account of its circumscribed outlook.

10. It suggests, that there was a type of Congregationalism in the *Church of England* before the time of Robert Browne and Robert Harrison, viz., in such churches as St. Peter Mancroft and St. Andrew's, Norwich, which by purchasing the patronage had obtained the right to elect their own Ministers; and further, that Browne probably derived many of his ideas on Congregational Church Polity from his study and criticism of these two churches during his sojourn in Norwich. Mr. Beecheno informs me that in Browne's time a Mr. John More was the incumbent of St. Andrew's. Browne undoubtedly refers to him in 'A Trve and Short Declaration', where more than once, if I remember correctly, he mentions Mr. More, a Puritan minister.

## II. THE EARLY LIFE OF JOHN ROBINSON RECONSTRUCTED IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEWLY DISCOVERED MANUSCRIPT.

Up to the present time, as has already been said, very little has been definitely known of Robinson's early life, and many points demand further investigation. Without attempting to solve the various problems still connected with this part of his career, we will seek here merely to correlate the fresh

facts we have learned with what has already been known concerning his life before 1609.

In the first place, it may be well to repeat the observation of previous writers, that much of the difficulty experienced by the investigator in tracing the various events in Robinson's life is due to his extremely common name. A considerable number of John Robinsons can doubtless be found in England during the period in which the Pastor of the Pilgrims lived, and even in Cambridge University at the time he was there, another Robinson of the same name was attending Emmanuel College.

It has often been stated during the past fifty years that our John Robinson was probably born in Gainsborough, but it appears to me that the suggestion of Dr. John Brown is more likely to prove fruitful, namely, that he may have been the son of Rev. John Robinson, D.D., of Lincoln,<sup>1</sup> whose life is briefly given in 'Athenae Cantabrigienses', and more fully in the 'Dictionary of National Biography'. The fact that Dr. Robinson held so many positions in different localities might then perhaps help to account for the fact that our John Robinson was referred to<sup>2</sup> sometimes during his college life as coming from Lincolnshire, sometimes from Nottinghamshire, and in the earliest instance from still another shire, namely, Yorkshire.

From the well-known record in the books of Leyden University it appears that Robinson was probably born some time in 1575, i. e., between March 25, 1575 (New Style), and March 25, 1576, but the place of his birth and the church in which he was baptized are as yet unknown, and his parentage still remains uncertain. In the absence of all other information even these bare facts, if they could be learned, might enable us to gain an interesting glimpse of the surroundings and home life in which the boy grew up.

At present the story of Robinson's career begins only with his experience at Cambridge University.<sup>3</sup> Here, there is now

<sup>1</sup> 'The Pilgrim Fathers of New England,' London, 1895, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> See the books of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

<sup>3</sup> As recorded in the books of Corpus Christi College. Many of these



no doubt, he arrived in 1592 and was admitted as a sizar at Corpus Christi, or Benet, College on April 9 of that year. He was elected a Scholar on Jan. 23, and admitted to that standing on Feb. 16, 1595-6. On Feb. 25, 1595-6, Robinson was approved for the B.A. degree, and on Mar. 27, 1597, he was admitted and sworn among the Fellows of his College, and having successfully passed his period of probation was evidently advanced to the full privileges of a Fellow exactly a year later on Mar. 27, 1598. On Mar. 28, 1599, he took the degree of M.A. In the Corpus Christi Order Book Robinson is mentioned in the yearly lists of college officers for 1598, 1599, and 1600. In 1599 he was 'Prelector Graecus', in 1600 'Decanus', but in the lists of officers elected for 1601, 1602, and 1603 he is not even mentioned, while under the date of Feb. 10, 1603-4, it is recorded in Latin, that 'Tho: Knowles of Norfolk, B.A., was [on that day] elected and admitted a Fellow of the College, by unanimous consent of the Master and nine Fellows, on the withdrawal and resignation in writing (*in scriptis*) of Mr. Robinson'. However, in the Register under the date 1602, 'John Robinson of Nottinghamshire, A.M., and Priest' is mentioned fifth in the list of College Fellows. This is the first indication we find of Robinson's having entered the service of the Church. I do not believe he was in residence during the years 1601-1603.

Joseph Hall, later Bishop of Norwich, who seems to have known Robinson personally, says of him in 1610,<sup>1</sup> 'You have twice kneeled to our Vice-Chancellour, when you were admitted to your degree', a statement which at the same time proves that our John Robinson was a University graduate and M.A., and also clearly differentiates him from his contemporary of the same name at Emmanuel College, who before 1610 had taken three degrees.

Thus we gain a very good idea of Robinson's college record. He was about sixteen years old when he came up points appeared in a review in 'The Christian Life' of Dr. H. M., and Rev. Morton, Dexter's 'The England and Holland of the Pilgrims', 1906.

<sup>1</sup> In 'A Common Apologie', p. 90.

to the University, and he seems to have had there a career of almost unbroken success. I question whether he was ordained before 1600, or possibly even before 1602. Probably he was expected to remain unmarried as long as he retained his Fellowship. Certainly it is significant, that he married Bridget White at Greasley, Notts., on Feb. 15, 1603-4,<sup>1</sup> just five days after the election of Thomas Knowles to the Fellowship he had formerly held at Corpus Christi. Before Robinson married, and possibly as early as 1602, he appears to have secured one of the three positions of preaching Elder, or Curate, at St. Andrew's Church, Norwich.

As has already been pointed out, Robinson says that he never was a member of St. Andrew's, i. e., that he never had lived in that parish, though a preacher there, and that he had made no effort in any other way to become a member of that church. He also tells us he had had his 'children'<sup>2</sup> (i. e., more than one child) baptized in the church of the parish where he lived. Thus far, however, though diligent search has been generously made for me by the Rectors and Vicars of various churches in Norwich,<sup>3</sup> I have not been able to

<sup>1</sup> As stated in a review in 'The Christian Life' of Dr. H. M., and Rev. Morton, Dexter's 'The England and Holland of the Pilgrims', 1906. The Register at Greasley unfortunately dates back only to 1620, so that this information cannot be verified or amplified thereby.

<sup>2</sup> Fol. 5 verso of the manuscript. Mr. Morton Dexter ('The England and Holland of the Pilgrims', 1906, p. 632) has collected the names of six of John Robinson's children. They are John, Bridget, Isaac, Mercy, Fear, James or Jacob. The fact that Robinson had two or three children baptized in Norwich helps us to determine more accurately than has heretofore been possible how late he remained in that city.

<sup>3</sup> The Rectors or Vicars of the following Norwich churches have kindly searched their baptismal registers for me:—St. John's, Unthank's Road; St. George Tombland; St. Clement's with St. Edmund's; St. Gregory's; St. Helen's; St. John de Sepulchre; St. Michael's with St. Martin-at-Oak; and All Saints'. I have searched the registers of the churches of St. Andrew and St. Peter Mancroft, and have learned that there are no Robinson baptisms mentioned in the register of St. Giles' during the years 1604-6. Some of these registers do not date back as far as the early years of the seventeenth century. The Register Bills of baptisms in Norwich parishes preserved at the Registry of the Archdeaconry of Norwich do not commence until 1688.

discover any record of the baptisms of Robinson's children. This fact is not so surprising, when one considers the very large number of churches whose registers may have to be searched, and the circumstance that one or two of the registers to be consulted have been irreparably damaged, and are now illegible for the years which we wish to consult. It is earnestly to be hoped that the dates of these baptisms may not have been totally lost or obliterated.

Hitherto it has generally been supposed that Robinson came to Norwich, or its neighbourhood, about 1600 and left it in 1604, when he went northward to Scrooby. I would suggest that he may not have come to live in Norwich until about two years before his marriage, though he may have done so somewhat earlier. Certainly, however, it now appears that he must have lived in Norwich between 1604 and 1606, and possibly until 1607. I also hazard the opinion, that one of the reasons why Robinson decided to leave Cambridge and to come as a preacher to Norwich may have been the fact that Bishop Jigon had formerly been the Master of Corpus Christi College, and undoubtedly knew Robinson well. Indeed, it should not be overlooked that Robinson may have arrived in Norwich about the time when the Master of his College was made Bishop. Possibly, also, Robinson may have hoped too much from the reign of King James I, which was then just beginning, and it may have been the accession of a new sovereign which had encouraged him to leave the walls of his college and to venture out into a more public life. Little did he foresee what was in store for the venturesome Puritan. As it was, the trying years of subscription were just commencing, and he can hardly have secured his new position, when dark and troublous times began to appear ahead. First came a visitation of the Diocese of Norwich in 1605 and 1606. Probably this did not bring Robinson into difficulties at once. Up to this time he had written no books, and as yet no suspicion of his harbouring excessive Puritan theories seems to have fallen upon him, but it is difficult to believe that he can have entirely escaped the necessity of subscription later than 1606.



Robinson's experience at this period, fortunately, has to some extent been related by himself and by one of his opponents. From these statements it appears that he first made objection to the prelates and later to the ceremonies.<sup>1</sup> Finally, he was suspended from his preaching and submitted to the 'prelates spirituall iurisdiction',<sup>2</sup> a rather curious circumstance, since he had formerly not admitted their authority.

Robinson's next step seems to have been to try to secure the position of Master of St. Giles' Hospital, otherwise known as the Old Men's Hospital, the election to which, according to Bloomfield, had since 1546 been vested in the Mayor and Aldermen of Norwich. Failing in this hope, he appears to have sought 'a lease', i.e. possibly a license, to serve as a City Preacher.<sup>3</sup> His request in this direction was also refused, and Joseph Hall intimates that had Robinson's wish been granted in either of these appeals, he might not have made 'this separation from the communion, gouernement, and worshippe of the Church of England'. However

<sup>1</sup> See J.[oseph] H.[all]'s 'A Common Apologie of the Chvrch of England', London, 1610, 4<sup>o</sup>, pp. 114-115, where he says: 'refusing the prelacy, you haue branded the ceremonies. So you did before your separation. Tell vs how long was it after your suspension, and before your departure . . . ? Was not this your resolution, when you went from Norwich to Lincoln-shire after your suspension? Denie it not; my witnesses are too strong.'

<sup>2</sup> As may be seen in the following passage from J.[oseph] H.[all]'s 'A Common Apologie,' p. 114: 'And touching ceremonies, you [Robinson] refused them formerly, but not long: and when you did refuse them, you knew not wherefore; for immediately before your suspension, you acknowledged them to be things indifferent, and for matter of scandall by them you had not informed your selfe (by your own confession) of a whole quarter of a yeare after. Why refused you then . . . ? But refusing them, you submitted to the prelates spirituall iurisdiction: there was your crime . . . Did euer any prelate challenge spirituall rule ouer your conscience?'

<sup>3</sup> Mentioned in J.[oseph] H.[all]'s 'A Common Apologie', p. 145, as follows: 'neither doubt we to say, that the Mastershippe of the Hospitall at Norwich, or a lease from that Citie (sued for, with repulse) might haue procured that this separation from the communion, gouernement, and worshippe of the Church of England, should not haue beene made by *John Robinson*.'

that may be, Robinson had to find some other outlet for his energies, as well as means with which to support his family. At first, he may merely have resorted to the Puritan practice of holding private meetings, probably attended in part at least by members of St. Andrew's parish, who during his troubles may have united with him in special covenant.<sup>1</sup> As yet no thought of becoming a separatist had apparently entered his mind. The people seem to have been determined to hear him, and even his suspension by the Bishop evidently did not deter them from 'resorting vnto and praying with' him (at his home?), as 'a man worthily revered of all the city for the graces of God in him', 'to whom the cure and charge of their sowles was ere while committed'.<sup>2</sup> The reward, however, which these faithful friends of Robinson received for their fidelity, we are told (and we have no reason to doubt the truth of the statement), was excommunication. As yet no record has been found relating to these persons or to those

<sup>1</sup> As may be suggested in the following passage in John Robinson's '*A Iustification of Separation*', 1610, p. 60:—

'We do with all thankfulness to our God acknowledg, and with much comfort remember, those lively feelings of Gods love, & former graces wrought in vs, & that one special grace amongst the rest, by which we have been enabled to drawe our selves into visible Covenant and holy communion. Yea, with such comfort and assurance do we call to mynde the Lords work this way in vs, as we doubt not but our salvation was sealed vp vnto our consciences by most infallible marks and testimonies (which could not deceave) before we conceived the least thought of separation; and so we hope it is with many others in the Church of Engl.[and], yea, and of Rome too.'

<sup>2</sup> H. A. [Insworth]'s '*Covnterpoysion*', 1608, 4<sup>o</sup>, pp. 246-7. The passage from which these words are taken reads as follows:—

'Nay, if any among you [in the Church of England], not meddling with the publik estate of your Church, but feeling or fearing his own particular soul-sicknes, doe resort to a physician (whose receipts are not after the common sort) for advise about his health, or of freindship and acquaintance to see him, he is subject to the censure and thunderbolt of your Church. Witnes the late practise in *Norwich*, where certeyn citizens were excommunicated for resorting vnto and praying with *Mr. Rob.[inson]*, a man worthily revered of all the city, for the graces of God in him (as your self also, I suppose, wil acknowledge) and to whom the cure and charge of their sowles was ere while committed.'

who excommunicated them, but doubtless some of those excommunicated were among the persons who later journeyed from Norwich to Leyden as members of the Pilgrim Church. The names of several of these Norwich Pilgrims are known to us to-day.<sup>1</sup>

Matters appear finally to have come to such a pass in Norwich, that Robinson had to leave the city for the sake of peace and safety. He now seems to have gone to many places, disputing chiefly with the Puritans in favour of separation from the Church of England,<sup>2</sup> but he says he had

<sup>1</sup> I have collected the following list from Mr. Morton Dexter's Appendix ('The Pilgrim Company in Leyden') in 'The England and Holland of the Pilgrims', London, 1906: viz., Susanna Bailey, Mary Butler, Stephen Butterfield, Anthony Fretwell, John Jenny, William Kibbett (or Cubitt), William Minter, Thomas Phillips, Thomas Willet, and Peter Wright.—Mr. Dexter, in the section of his Appendix, entitled 'Other English People in Leyden', mentions three other persons as coming from Norwich. As there is just a possibility that these persons may after all have belonged to the Pilgrim church, they may be mentioned here: viz., William Greenwood, Nicholas Haskins, and John Robertson.

It is to be hoped that these names may be looked up in the baptismal registers of the Norwich churches (especially St. Andrew's), in order to see from which parishes the Norwich Pilgrims came.

<sup>2</sup> As may be seen in the following citation from John Robinson's 'A Manvmission', 1615, 4<sup>o</sup>, p. 20:—

*'My being once at his [i.e., at William Perkins'] successours sermon since I professed separation is neyther pertinently, nor truely, obiected by him. I was there as in many other places since I made question of it & disputed for it, but had not otherwise professed it. And vppon this occasion I think good to note down the work of Gods providence towards me in this matter. Comeing to Cambridge (as to other places, where I hoped most to fynde satisfaction to my troubled heart), I went the forenoon to Mr. [Laurence] Cha:[derton] his exercise, who vppon the relation which Mary made to the disciples of the resurrection of Christ, delivered in effect this doctrine, that the things which concerned the whole Church were to be declared publiquely to the whole Church, & not to some parte onely; b[r]inging for instance & prooffe the wordes of Christ, Mat: 18 [:] 17, Tell it to the Church; confirming therein one mayn ground of our difference from the Ch:[urch] of Engl:[and], which is, that Christ hath given his power for excommunication to the whole Church gathered together in his name, as I. Cor: 5, the officers as the governors, & the people as the governed, in the vse thereof; vnto which Church his servants*



not yet 'otherwise professed it', i.e., put his theory of the necessity of separation from the Established Church into practice. Among other places he visited Cambridge, and there heard Mr. Paul Baynes and Mr. Laurence Chaderton. Dr. William Ames in his 'Second Manvdvction', 1615 (p. 29), says that Robinson declared on this visit to Cambridge 'to one of his acquaintance, that he had been amongst some company of the seperation before his comming to Camb:[ridge], & exercising amongst them, had renounced his former ministry . . .'

We are given no further clue as to the whereabouts of this 'company of the seperation', of which he speaks. Was it the Norwich Brownist congregation, which may still have been in existence under the leadership of Mr. Hunt, or was it the Brownist company at Gainsborough then under the charge of Richard Clyfton or John Smyth, or perhaps some other Brownist company as that at Colchester or one in the neighbourhood of Ipswich? My own view is that he is alluding to the Gainsborough Brownists.

are comaunded to bring theyr necessary complaynts. And I would desyre myne opposite eyther to shew me how & where this Church is (haveing this power) in the parrish assemblies: or els, by what warrant of Gods word I (knowing what Christ the Lord commaunded herein) may with good conscience remayn a member of a Ch:[urch] without this power (much lesse where the contrary is advanced), & so go on in the known transgression of that his commaundement, *Tell the Church?*

'In the afternoon I went to hear Mr. [Paul] B:[aynes], the successour of Mr. Perkins, who from Eph: 5, & v. 7. or 11, shewed the vnlawfulnes of familiar conversation between the servants of God & the wicked, vpon these grounds, or the most of them: 1. that the former are *light*, & the other *darknes*, between which God hath separated, 2. that the godly hereby are endangered to be leavened with the others wickednes, 3. that the uncked are hereby hardened in receaving such approbation from the godly, 4. that others are thereby offended, & occasioned to think them all alike, & as birdes of a fether, which so flock together. Whom afterwarde privately I desyred, as I do also others, to consider vvwhether these very reasons make not as effectually, & much more, agaynst the spirituall communion of Gods people (especially vvhere there vvants the means of reformation) vvith the apparently vvicked, to vvhom they are as *light* to *darknes*.'

Robinson had accordingly renounced his ministry in the Church of England before he came to Cambridge, but as yet he had evidently not entered into covenant with this 'company of the seperation', and consequently could not then be justly termed a separatist. Indeed, as we have already learned from one of the citations from Robinson's lost writing, it was evidently with the utmost reluctance, that he finally broke off his connexion with the Church of England.

John Bastwick in the 'Antiloquie'<sup>1</sup> of his work entitled, 'THE | UTTER ROUTING | Of the whole Army of all the | INDEPENDENTS & SECTARIES, | . . .', London, 1646, 4°, confirms what Robinson says on this point, and adds some details which are worthy of attention :

yea, I can speake thus much in the presence of God, *that Master Robinson of Leiden, the Pastor of the Brownist Church there, told mee and others, who are yet living to witnesse the truth of what I now say, that if hee might in England have injoyed but the liberty of his Ministry there, with an immunity but from the very ceremonies, and that they had not forced him to a subscription to them and imposed upon him the observation of them, that hee had never separated from it, or left that Church.*

Robinson appears to have joined the Brownists at Scrooby not long before their departure, or perhaps their first attempted departure, for Amsterdam. For some reason he seems to have preferred the congregation at Scrooby to that at Gainsborough. Perhaps he did not care for John Smyth, or perhaps he found Richard Clyfton a person of greater stability. However this may be, I do not now remember any evidence which would show that Robinson and Smyth were especially friendly to each other. Probably they represented two decidedly different types of men.

Until 1609 Robinson's position in the Pilgrim congregation seems to have been of a subordinate character. On his removal from Amsterdam to Leyden, however, with the beginning of his pastorate of the Pilgrims, he suddenly began to take a leading part in the controversies of the separatists.

<sup>1</sup> Sig. f.<sub>2</sub>.

It was about this time that the original text of the manuscript with which we have been dealing, was written against Robinson as the pastor of the Leyden Brownists.

### III. THE JOHN ROBINSON CHURCH IN NORWICH (IDENTIFIED BY THE MANUSCRIPT) IN HIS TIME AND TO-DAY.

A year ago I paid a visit to Norwich in order to learn more about John Robinson's connexion with St. Andrew's Church. Every facility was granted me for my investigations, but to my keen disappointment I found there no reminiscence whatever of his residence in Norwich, to say nothing of his having preached in St. Andrew's. Indeed, even in Bishop Tanner's time not even a tradition seems to have been current in Norwich, that the Pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers had ever been connected with St. Andrew's, or, if there was such a tradition, he does not mention it. Bloomfield, also, evidently knew nothing of Robinson's having been a preacher there, and when I recently visited Mr. Beecheno, the present indefatigable historian of the church, he likewise was apparently not aware of it.

In fact, during the period with which we are concerned, the history of St. Andrew's Church is shrouded in obscurity. To be sure the Register of baptisms, marriages, and deaths was regularly and carefully kept, but in it very slight reference was made even to the Rectors or Vicars of the church, while the preaching Elders as such are only most casually mentioned. Indeed, Mr. Beecheno did not seem to be conscious of the fact that at the beginning of the seventeenth century St. Andrew's Church regularly had three such assistant preachers, though he had collected considerable evidence which well agrees with the testimony of our manuscript thereto. The Churchwardens' accounts, furthermore, and any other records of the affairs of the church at that time which may have been kept, with the exception of the Register and two books of records concerning poor relief, have all perished, so that there are almost no extant manuscript



particulars to furnish us with any satisfactory history of the church during that period.

The Diocesan Registry, Norwich, with its Visitation Books, Act Books, Institution Books, &c., &c., relating to the period when Robinson was at St. Andrew's, affords many opportunities for research, but to my disappointment I was not successful in finding there a single reference to our John Robinson or to any excommunications of persons who resorted to his private meetings<sup>1</sup>—a most surprising circumstance. Indeed, the omission could not have been more complete if the Episcopal authorities had conspired to exclude all mention of his name from these records in order thereby to prevent the perpetuation of his name in connexion with the history of Norwich. This lack of evidence, however, certainly cannot be explained on any such ground, nor can the inference be drawn that Robinson's position in the city was utterly insignificant, though probably relatively unimportant. Robinson without doubt had considerable influence,<sup>2</sup> or Joseph Hall and others would not have been so anxious to win him back to the Church of England.

Though no further reference to Robinson as a preaching Elder of St. Andrew's appears to have been preserved, the church itself (unlike some churches then in existence) is still standing and in constant use. It is also still considered next to the church of St. Peter Mancroft the finest parish church in Norwich. As in the church of St. Peter Mancroft, too, the congregation of St. Andrew's continues to have the right of electing its own Vicar—a privilege enjoyed by comparatively few parishes in the Church of England,—having purchased

<sup>1</sup> My investigations were necessarily hurried, but were as thorough as was possible under the circumstances. I can only hope that some succeeding student, who has more time at his disposal, may be more successful than I was.

<sup>2</sup> The author of our manuscript has the following remark relating to Robinson's influence:—

'I beseeche the God of mercye to gyue you true repentance in due tyme, and to make youre returne as famous, as your falling of is notorious and scandalous.' Fol. 17 recto.

the patronage in '1561 according to the Parish Book'.<sup>1</sup> The church building is well preserved both in its exterior and interior, but within great alterations have taken place since Robinson's day, and the interior is now essentially modern. The changes which have been made, too, have not always been in harmony with the predominant style of architecture, a rather disappointing feature. With these alterations the old font and the quaintly painted windows of Robinson's day have disappeared.

Some idea of St. Andrew's Church in Robinson's time may doubtless be gained from an existing transcript<sup>2</sup> of a manuscript written by John Kirkpatrick, Chamberlain of Norwich, who was born in 1686 and died in 1728. One or two citations from this work will be of interest in this connexion:—

In taking a view of the funeral memorials in this church I begin with the tomb about 3 foot high at the lower end, which is not very obvious to observation, because the font is placed upon it, & an addition of ground raised on each side thereof near as high as the tombstone, encompassed by a wall about the same height, & thereon a rail on the 4 sides. . . .

Having done with the funeral inscriptions upon gravestones & monuments, I observe in the windows these following remarkable things painted on the glass. . First, the great east window of the Church hath been glazed with glass most curiously stained with good figures & lively colours. It consists of 5 dayes or panes, but the 3 middle panes have lost their painted . . . , & having been defaced are now glazed with plain glass. We may conclude these panes had formerly the representation of our Lord's crucifixion & perhaps of the 2 thieves, one on each hand of him. The outside pane to the north hath in it the story of Abraham's offering his son Isaac represented in good paintings, where the angel stays the sword just ready to slay Isaac. In the other outside pane we see the brasen serpent

<sup>1</sup> F. R. Beecheno's 'Notes on the Church of Saint Andrew', Norwich, 1883, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Entitled, 'Extracts from Manuscripts some original, some copied from early documents, relating to Norwich, and bequeathed to the Corporation of that City by John Kirkpatrick, Esq.', to be found in the Norwich Free Library.

erected upon the pole & the Israelites bitten by the fiery serpents looking up to it for cure. . .<sup>1</sup>

In the windows of the upper range on the north side hath been depicted very artificially the Dance of Death, where, in every pane of those II windows (there being 4 in each window), Death hath been represented leading away a person of one degree or other. In one you see him handing off an Emperour, in another a Pope, in another a Cardinal (great reluctance shewn by them to follow), & so of all degrees, or professions, to a carpenter & other mechanick trades ; but the greatest part of these figures are quite defaced. . .<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Kirkpatrick also makes the following observation which may be of interest to us :—

A Lecture Sermon is preached at this Church every Thursday in the forenoon, which was founded by the City, who give 20 lb. per annum to the Minister of this parish for that purpose, which is still paid by the City.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps it was for some such post that Robinson applied, when he sought for a 'lease' from the city of Norwich.

In the recently discovered Robinson manuscript, as we have already seen, are found further particulars relating to the history of St. Andrew's at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and especially Robinson's personal objections to that church. These latter, though most of them have already been mentioned in the citations from Robinson's writing, may be summarized as follows: namely, that St. Andrew's Church, while enjoying certain uncommon privileges, was in reality not different from the ordinary parish churches; that the ministers of St. Andrew's, though elected by the congregation and evidently excellent men, had to be approved by the Bishop, must obey him, and could not be removed without his consent; that St. Andrew's, like other parish churches, lacked the power of excommunication<sup>4</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 254-5.

<sup>2</sup> p. 256.

<sup>3</sup> p. 268.

<sup>4</sup> Fol. 81 verso. Robinson's opponent makes the following answer to this charge:—

'it cannott be said that St. Andrewes parish simplie wantes the power of excommunication, so long as it hath part of it in her owne hand, the rest in the hand of her feoffees of trust, or Committies, who, yf they had



consequently was a confused assembly, of which the members manifested a persecuting spirit, were not separated from the world, nor united in a 'holye' covenant; and that St. Andrew's had been guilty of simony, when it purchased the right of presentation from the Patron.

We learn, also, from our manuscript that St. Andrew's in that day had a minister (i. e. a Vicar, who, however, may not have had that title), three preaching Elders, and, like other parish churches, no Deacons<sup>1</sup> of the New Testament type. The Rector or Vicar of St. Andrew's in the early seventeenth century (for I do not know which title is more properly to be assigned to this official at that period) was Thomas Newhouse.<sup>2</sup> The preaching Elders of his incumbency are not definitely known, but I think they were very likely Dr. Nicholas Bound (or Bownd), Robert Gallard, and, for a part of the time, John Robinson. The person who took the position vacated by Robinson, I fancy, may have been John Chappel, the incumbent of the living between 1627 and 1634.

In concluding this account, it may not be inappropriate to express the hope that at this time, when the commemoration of the Pilgrim Fathers at Plymouth (England) is under consideration, some fitting memorial to John Robinson, their Pastor, may be placed in the parish church of St. Andrew, Norwich.

care & zeale of God in them to ymproue their power to the best, might purge the churches of so much drosse, as neyther you should be scandalized & put into schisme, nor others perhaps wish, as they doe, to see a change of that order.' Fol. 81 verso.

<sup>1</sup> See fol. 41 recto.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson was not the incumbent, as may be seen on fol. 75 recto, where 'the minister of St. Andrews' is spoken of as 'a lawfull minister, vnlawfullie and sinnefully forsaken of you [i. e., Robinson], . . .'







## Date Due

[illegible]

Library Bureau Cat no. 1137

Photomount  
Pamphlet  
Binder

Gaylord Bros. Inc.

Makers  
Syracuse, N. Y.  
PAT. JAN 21, 1908

WAR 30 '61

922.3

R662B

P23131

SCHOOL OF RELIGION



D02622862S



Duke University Libraries